

Interaction

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 1, SUMMER 2017

CCCF Turns 30 Years!



After 30 years . . .
How is Child Care
in Canada Doing and
Where to Next?

Rants among our Champion
Early Childhood Educators and
CCCF Founders

The Impact of Parenting
on Child Outcomes:
What Early Childhood
Educators Need to Know



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For our 30th anniversary issue of *Interaction* and CCCF, we asked some of CCCF's founders and leaders in child care across Canada to argue, rant, rave, and discuss child care issues and directions for our sector. (pg. 16)

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CCCF is about the value of children. We value children.

In order to protect and enhance our children, to promote their safety and their healthy growth and development, we are committed to providing Canadians with the very best in early learning and child care knowledge and best practices.

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Behind the Scenes

So we've reached the 30 year mile stone for a national child care and early learning organization in Canada. What is 30 years anyway?

At 30 years of age in north American households nowadays, most children have grown up, moved out of their parent's house, finished school and are working and contributing taxes to the economy. Or maybe they are starting to have children of their own while paying off their student loan. Or maybe they are trying to save to buy a first home, but if they live in Toronto or Vancouver and are thinking maybe they are better to move somewhere else in the country to afford a home of their own. Or they may actually be in the growing number of 30-year-olds who choose to still live at home until they can pay off their student loan or save for a house. Let's just say moving forward in big strides and milestones for many in Canada is not as easy as it used to be. And when and if they do venture out and make a family – just wait until they see those child care waiting lists and child care bills!

Was it like this 30 years ago – in the late 80s? How about the Canadian Child Care Federation? How did we jump out of the nest and create that dream for a national child care organization? We did it the same way grown kids venture out on their own. With a big dream, a leap of faith and sweat and tears.

In this 30th anniversary issue, you will read e-mail letter exchanges and back and forth arguments from the very founders of CCCF and leaders in child care across Canada about how they think we are doing in realizing the dream of creating a national child care system for Canada.

Are we all grown up, independent and looking to greater horizons to create something even bigger, with more reach and more impact? You bet we are. We are growing up big and strong.

Here's to 30 years big little CCCF. And here is to many more great years ahead!

Claire McLaughlin
Editor@cccfc-fcsge.ca



INSIDE THE FEDERATION

Congratulations to the Winners of the PM Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education 2017

Congratulations to the five Early Childhood Educators from Across Canada who went above and beyond in their care and innovative programs for child care!!

Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Awarded 5 Recipients of the PM Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Education at their 2016-2017 ceremony.



Congratulations to the following shown from left to right: Sarah Marshall of Kenville Nova Scotia (Colleague standing in for her in her absence), Patricia Furman of Winnipeg Manitoba, Erin Pauls of Whitehorse, Yukon, Caren Eigenmann of Port Moody BC and Sabrina Rehman of Ottawa, Ontario.

The Canadian Child Care Federation is Proud to Announce Roni Cahen from Vancouver, BC as the 2017 Recipient of the CCCF Award of Excellence

About the award recipient: Now retired, Roni Cahen generously spends her retirement years mentoring Early Childhood Educators and being “on the floor” with infants and toddlers, continuing to learn from them. Her strong vision for responsive, collaborative and inquiry-based learning has fueled many passions and modelled passionate and critical ways of educating young children.

Roni was—and continues to be—an early childhood educator who works tirelessly to improve child care in British Columbia. She has been instructing early childhood education in college level programs for more than 30 years and while her accomplishments are many, one that particularly stands out is the design of a process to implement inquiry, taking small steps, inviting children’s collaborative meaning making, repeating experiences with minor changes as pertinent, revisiting work

to engage children in discussion and to set an expectation of collective inquiry.

She continues to volunteer as a mentor to educators at the SFU Child Care Society, where she guides educators to implement reflective practices as teacher researchers.

Passion for early childhood education drives her commitment and her work. She voraciously reads research in ECE and strives to implement it in her practice. The sources of learning for Roni are many. She travels, watch movies, and she appreciates cultural events. This enriches her vast experience teaching and intellectually growing. When a new book in ECE studies is published, it is certain that Roni has already purchased a copy to feed her desire to grow and learn.

Roni attended University of California in Berkeley, later taking early childhood courses in New Jersey and completing those initial studies at Vancouver Community College. She received her MA in Human Development from Pacific Oaks College in 1996, She worked with children for five years in New Jersey and twenty years in the Lower Mainland and was a teacher in Richmond, BC at a Parent Participation Preschool for eighteen years. It was during that time that she began teaching various Early Childhood



Education courses for Richmond, Delta, North Shore and Burnaby. She continues to be an instructor in the Burnaby Community and Continuing Education ECE Program, but at this point in her life focuses on teaching curriculum courses that reflect Reggio-inspired practice.

The Nominees: The CCCF would also like to recognize all of the nominees for the *CCCF Award of Excellence 2017*. Each one has contributed significantly to early childhood learning and care in Canada and are worthy of recognition. They are:

- Marilyn Armstrong and Gina Blank from St. Albert, AB and Edmonton, AB
- Liz Bruce from Oakbank, MB
- Deepika (Dee) Bakshi from Calgary, AB
- Carmelita “Carmen” Tilley from Fort McMurray, AB
- Barbara Wolff from Edmonton, AB
- Anick Lia-Pehe from Winnipeg, MB

The CCCF would also like to thank all of the individuals who took the time to nominate all of these outstanding candidates as well as the Awards Selection Committee, chaired by Marni Flaherty from Hamilton, ON and comprised of committee members Jean Robinson from Lincoln, NB, Cathy Ramos from Halifax, NS, Ruth Houston from Toronto, ON, Jadranka Pocrnic from Saskatoon, SK, MaryAnn Farebrother from Calgary, AB and Carla Hees from Vancouver, BC

FROM WHERE I SIT

Thirty Years and Growing

by Don Giesbrecht
CEO CCCF

The Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCF) proudly celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. Wow, 30 years since a visionary group of women gathered together to create the Canadian Child Day Care Federation, as it was known then. The dream was founded on four enduring mandates that are as relevant today as they were in 1987:

1. Improve the quality of early learning and child care services for Canadian families by implementing services and information for the early learning and child care community
2. Support the development and activities of Provincial/Territory child care associations
3. Provide information and facilitate communication among members of the early learning and child care community, government and others interested in supporting quality early learning and child care
4. Develop models, standards and guidelines for quality early learning and child care, professional development and organizational design

My guess would be that the original leaders and visionaries of the CCCF probably would have envisioned that the CCCF—or child care policy in Canada for that matter—thirty years later would look a bit different than it does

today. I would further guess that they would have believed that by 2017, the four mandates of the CCCF would have taken on a more evolved life. Without dragging down the 30th anniversary, it is absolutely fair to say that as compared to even 10 or 11 years ago, we are playing catch-up.

In the pages of this issue of *Interaction* (and spoiler alert, in the fall 2017 issue as well) you will read insightful and wonderful contributions from several people who helped to found the CCCF as well as others who have, or are, contributing to the continued evolution and development of the CCCF and Canada’s child care sector. Words of wisdom, lessons learned and future beliefs/visions for a better Canada for children and families from people who see, as the CCCF founders did 30 years ago, that the status quo is not good enough. They are an impatient group of contributors and playing catch-up does not sit well with them. Action is better than waiting and words are hollow without real investments in child care. They believe, I strongly suspect, in the words of former US Vice President, Joe Biden:

“Don’t tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I’ll tell you what you value.”

Yes, the recently announced federal budget has renewed the federal role in child care funding and policy in Canada and this is very good. It has renewed the work of the CCCF, its partners and many others in the child care sector. However, as an organization and as a believer in Vice President’s Biden’s words, it falls short on truly valuing children and the pivotal role and importance of quality, affordable, inclusive and accessible child care services for Canadian families. We have, as we did 30 years ago, much work to do.

I encourage you to read the words of our contributors in the pages that follow. Their wisdom, knowledge and passion will inform and inspire. Here’s to 30 years and the debt we owe our founders. May we achieve all that they dreamed—and then some.



Goodbye Anne

by Robin McMillan

BA, RECE, Senior Consultant CCCF

The Canadian Child Care Federation lost a dedicated champion and dear friend on February 15, 2017. Anne Maxwell, retired CCCF Senior Director of Projects, Programs and Services (1991 to 2011), passed away in her 73rd year.

“Anne has left a legacy and we are all the better for it.” – Don Giesbrecht, CEO Canadian Child Care Federation

Anne had diverse interests and talents that included sewing, photography, family genealogy, Canadian history and international travel. Our sector got to know Anne through her work to improve early learning and child care throughout Canada and overseas with her contributions to international projects.

During her 20 year career at the Canadian Child Care Federation, Anne steered many projects and initiatives as well as developed systems that the sector continues to benefit from. She was key in the development of the popular resource *Meeting the Challenge*, our highly-regarded *Research Connections* series, the *Family Child Care*



Training, Ethics Training materials as well as many, many other projects and resources. Her work greatly influenced the practice of early learning and child care, thus improving the health and well-being of young children across Canada.

“Anne was the heart and soul of so many CCCF projects and resources. She was wise, creative, dedicated, and determined. Child care has lost one of our best.” – Pat Wedge, Executive Director, Manitoba Child Care Association

Her work lives on in many of CCCF resources and in our approach to new initiatives. Anne had an eye for detail and a work ethic like I have never seen. Her dedication was evident each and every day. She was often the first to arrive and the last to leave the office. She was a mentor to many who worked at CCCF, including me. I was fortunate to work with Anne for over 12 years. Her caring, heartfelt advice and guidance led many in our field to bright and promising careers both within the sector and beyond.

“Anne was an amazing woman who worked endlessly for Early Childhood Education. She was a class act-my thoughts are with her family and to all of us that knew her as we remember her.” – April Kalyniuk, past Chair CCCF

I will miss her dearly. So long Anne. Thanks for all you did for me, CCCF, child care practitioners across Canada and young children from coast to coast to coast. May you rest in peace.

“Anne unfailingly demonstrated integrity, grit and vision. RIP Anne. Your spirit will continue to infuse all who knew you.” – Carol Langner, former CCCF board member

Anne is survived by her husband Kent, daughter Jennifer (Michael), brother Burt (Kathy) and sister-in-law Shirley. If you wish to make a donation in memory of Anne, please consider the Alzheimer Society.

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Parent's Perspectives on the Role of Drop-in Programs in Building Child-Parent Attachment

by Ly-My-Kim Tran

Current Research and Gaps

There has been much research on the benefits of attachment based interventions. These research and intervention methods use the work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth to develop and enhance: paternal sensitivity and responsiveness, using the parent as a home base so that the child has a sense of trust and exploring the environment as well as enhancing already developed intervention programs to make them more efficient as well as cost effective (Colmer, Rutherford & Pam, 2011; Scharfe, 2011; Niccols 2008; Fish & McCollum, 1997). It has been found by McCain and Mustard (1999) (as cited in Colmer, Rutherford and Murphy, 2011) that research in brain development “has demonstrated that the quality of interactions between an infant and caregiver in the first three years of life significantly affects the development of the brain and future physical, emotional and mental health” (Colmer, Rutherford & Murphy, 2011, p. 17). It has also been found in many other studies that attachment is formed in the first year of life and is solidified in the next couple of years (Rait, 2012; Scharfe, 2011).

While research and attachment-based intervention programs have benefitted at-risk populations, not much is known about community programs and how they benefit the overall population within that community. North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services (n.a) defines drop-in programs as a type of child care arrangement where care is provided with the caregivers

on site. Parents are also given the opportunity to participate in activities that these programs have to offer (North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services, n.a). Examples of drop-in programs in Toronto are Ontario Early Years Centres. According to the Ontario Ministry of Education (2014), the Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) is a place for children up to the age of 6 and their caregivers to take part in activities together; it is also a great resource for caregivers in terms of development and support. Services within OEYC can include: preparing to be a new parent, helping children with developmental milestones, learning new parenting skills and meeting needs of diverse families by offering information about other programs within their community (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014).

Scharfe (2011) found that community based programs are not only a cost effective way to intervene with parents who are not at risk but whose children might benefit from improved parenting skills, but it has also been found that the parents that do need a little help are insecure and would have more difficulties asking for support as they may view intervention programs negatively or that professionals will judge them. Community programs that are designed to focus on practical skills and are incorporated into mainstream programs are more likely to help these parents as they do not feel judged as there are many parents in these programs learning the same thing (Scharfe, 2011).

It has also been established by Cunningham, Bremmer & Boyle (1995) (as cited in Niccols, 2008) that limited resources due to financial restrictions within the communities and increasing demands on intervention services diminishes community based programs that are beneficial to families of mixed at risk and average groups (Niccols, 2008).

Purpose of Study

By examining parent-child community programs in non-risk families, while using a case study approach, there can be a better understanding of how parents perceive community programs and its role on the parent child attachment relationship with their children under 3 years of age. With this understanding, administrators and program developers can better enhance program models and services that they use within the program. Families within the area can develop a better understanding of how the program works and participate more without fear of judgment. Funders can see the benefit and cost effectiveness of having programs that have a parent-child attachment element in not only the program but within the community.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand parental views regarding their attachment relationship with their child and how their local community program contributes to this kind of program for families participating in a local community



parent-child drop in program in Toronto. For the purpose of this study, attachment will generally be defined as a child's strong disposition to turn to their primary caregiver in certain situations when frightened, tired or ill and will seek proximity to this figure while the primary caregiver responds sensitively to the child's cues and signals (Bowlby, 1969/1982).

The Study

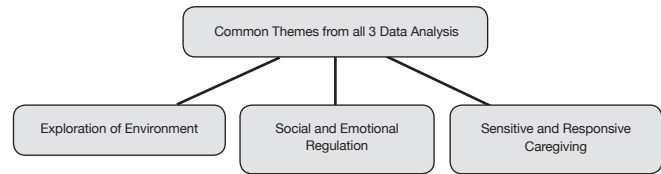
One primary caregiver who has a child that is 3-years-old and currently attends a local drop-in program in Toronto volunteered to participate in the case study. Approval to conduct the research study with the caregiver at the drop-in centre was obtained from the program director. Ethics approval was given from the Seneca College Research Ethics Board (REB). Voluntary informed consent was obtained from the participant after ethics had given approval.

This research is a case study approach and so data was collected on this family through one half hour observation, one thirty-seven minute semi-structured interview and a screening tool called the Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (or PICCOLO for short) by Brookes Publishing. The PICCOLO is a standardized screening tool which uses a ten minute observation to score on parenting behaviours with children who are between the ages of 10 to 47 months (Brookes Publishing, 2016).

Findings

The findings of this case study helped illuminate some insights into how parents view their local drop-in community program and how it affects their attachment relationship between them and their child. Through observation, semi-structured interviews and the PICCOLO it can be suggested that the parent perceives that the local drop-in program as a whole has some impact on the attachment relationship between her and her child. This can be seen as common themes between all the different data collected is sensitive and responsive caregiving observed has led to the parent being a secure base for the child as they begin to independently explore their environment while working on their social and emotional regulation. These aspects within the case study can be suggested as important indicators of influencing a positive attachment relationship as Bowlby (1969/1982) states that attachment comes from warm and responsive care which leads to the development of the child viewing the caregiver as a secure base which reduces the child's anxiety and increases confidence to explore their surroundings while promoting socialization. It has been suggested that the drop-in program has helped promote the independent exploration of the environment as the parent has said that it was a safe space and the interactions that she has witnessed over the years have helped her in her own parenting style and interaction.

Figure 1. Mind map of the common themes found within all three data collection methods



Suggestion for Future Research/ Practice

Results and data collected from this research can be used as a pilot study to help with future research that wishes to examine parental perspectives on drop-in programs and how it affects the attachment relationship between parent and child.

The results and data collected from this research can also inform and help current local community programs through their policies, staff training and knowledge. During the interview, the parent gave much insight into areas for staff and program opportunities and so it is worth looking into and seeing if it is feasible while falling within the program's own policies and procedures. This can also be used as a good conversation starter to critically review current policies and get input from participants and families who use these programs.

Kim is an RECE who recently graduated from Seneca College in their Child Development Honours Degree program. She currently works at a local non-profit organization as a child development specialist.

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Importance of Parenting and the Effects of Proximal and Distal Factors on the Parent–Child Relationship

by **Emis Akbari**

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Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Overview

Policy makers generally support the notion that financial and educational success are functions of early life experiences, and that the developmental trajectories may be improved through various intervention strategies such as high quality early education (Nix et al., 2016; Pascal, 2009). However, what is becoming increasingly evident is that mental and physical health are also significantly, and often critically, affected by early life experiences, and can be improved through careful changes in public policy, public health, and investment (Enoch et al., 2016; Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Stoolmiller, 2008). Research has demonstrated that early life adversity affects brain development in a manner that increases one's susceptibility to an extensive range of physical and mental health problems (Bouvette-Turcot et al., 2017). Furthermore, typical development is largely associated

with acquiring a set of behavioural, psychological, and psychosocial skills that are grounded in constancy, stability, safety, and a nurturing environment during critical early stages of life.

Strategies that improve children's exposure to a stable, consistent, safe and nurturing environment can enhance their cognitive outcomes and their physical and mental health across their lifespan. This paper will discuss the impact of various factors that may influence parenting practices and the companion paper will focus on its relevance to the early childhood environment. The impact of such factors may inadvertently interfere with child rearing but access to high quality early childhood education may help buffer some of the early risks (NICHD, 2002); as is further explored in the companion article in this journal.

Parenting

The first several years of a child's life are central to brain, behaviour, and socio-emotional development (Doyle, Harmon, Heckman, & Tremblay, 2009). During this time, children rapidly acquire new motor, verbal, socio-emotional, and cognitive skills that are accompanied by changes in their parental needs. As infants transition into toddlerhood, parents are expected to adjust their parental behaviours and strategies to not only comfort, but stimulate, direct, and guide their child. Positive and responsive parenting that includes warmth and positive affect has been shown to safeguard children from certain environmental adversities and subsequent undesirable outcomes (Herbers, Cutuli, Monn, Narayan & Masten, 2014). A lack of parental warmth and responsiveness compounded by hostile-reactive and rejecting parenting, is associated with poor developmental outcomes including but

not limited to disruptions of a child's sense of autonomy and impairment of expressive and receptive language that may constrain the potential for learning (NICHD, 2002). This may result in increased risk for child psychopathology, adult obesity, depression/ anxiety, and other chronic illnesses.

Factors that are known to influence the parent-child relationship (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Rosa & Tudge, 2013) include teen and single parenthood, low socio-economic status (SES), unemployment, poor housing, parental mental health issues, and marital conflict. These factors have been shown to not only sustain, but also exacerbate the challenges of parenting. These factors have been known to individually and collectively impact parenting and caregiver-child interactions. The sources of influence on parenting can be classified as distal (i.e. neighbourhood characteristics) to more proximal (i.e. marital conflict) factors (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Many of these distal factors are thought to influence and shape child development through their effects on more proximal factors such as parenting.

Distal Factors

Social Economic Status and Parenting

Robust associations have been established between social disadvantage, poverty, and parenting practices. Low socioeconomic status (SES) is related to lower parental responsiveness and more restrictive parenting styles (Bornstein & Bradley, 2014). In fact, income is negatively correlated to disciplinary parenting, while higher SES parents display less behavioural prohibitions towards their children. Secondly, mothers with higher SES are more likely to



show prolonged conversations with their children resulting in higher rates of language production by 24 months of age (Fernald, Marchman, & Weisleder, 2013). Maternal responsivity therefore relates positively to children's early language development (Hudson, Levickis, Down, Nicholls, & Wake, 2015).

Proximal Factors

Teen Parents

Teen pregnancy has been associated with countless social implications such as school failure, decreased employment opportunities, and sustained poverty. However, the most adverse outcomes of teen pregnancy are the consequences for the development of children within these families. More direct effects include lower birth weight, increased risk of premature birth, less prenatal care, and unfavourable developmental outcomes (Ganchimeg et al., 2014).

Research has demonstrated that teen mothers experience more feelings of

well-being and exhibit less emotional distress when social support and resources are available (Huang et al., 2014). Support of teen mothers has been shown to increase the number of girls that return to and graduate from school and subsequently gain employment, while reducing the dependency on welfare (Letourneau, Stewart, & Barnfather, 2004). These intervening factors can positively influence the developmental outcomes of children of teenage parents.

Preterm Delivery and Low Birth Weight (LBW)

Studies have indicated that mother-infant dyad interaction styles differ between preterm and full-term infants (Agostini, Neri, Dellabartola, Biasini & Monti, 2014). These differences have been suggested to reflect increased stress in the preterm-mother dyad (Hawes, McGowan, O'Donnell, Tucker, & Vohr, 2016) and differences in child temperament associated with LBW/preterm infants. Parenting children with special needs such as LBW/preterm

babies, has been shown to be associated with less responsive parenting. This can at least in part be attributed to a child's difficulty in communicating clear signals regarding their needs (Landry, Smith, Swank & Guttentag, 2008). LBW babies have been shown to have poorer language development and problems with emotional and behavioural regulation (Landry et al., 2008). Therefore, parents of LBW/preterm infants may require increased support.

Depression and Mothering

The rate of depression is higher in women, particularly during the postpartum period (O'Hara, 2009), and even higher in younger and/or single mothers and those with lower SES (Beck, 2001). These findings suggest that a lack of social and/or economic resources may increase the risk of developing postpartum depression. Depressive symptoms may exert an adverse effect on the mother-infant relationship (Pawluski, Lonstein & Fleming, 2017). Since the mother often represents a child's primary social

environment, especially within the first year of life, the effects of postpartum depression on a child's development are of particular concern. Depressed mothers are less responsive, display less affectionate behaviour, and are more hostile and intrusive compared to non-depressed mothers (Akbari, Gonzalez, Dudin, Steiner & Fleming, 2015). Depressed mothers may fail to recognize infant cues and therefore, often are unable to meet their infant's needs.

Children of mothers who are depressed are more likely to develop psychosocial problems than those raised by non-depressed mothers. In a large meta-analysis, Goodman and colleagues (2011) established that children of depressed mothers show higher levels of externalizing and internalizing behaviours. Decreased school readiness and lower verbal reception is also repeatedly demonstrated in children of depressed mothers (NICHD, 2002) and may impact academic achievement in later years (Murray et al., 2010).

Marital Conflict

The association between marital conflict and child developmental outcomes has been well established (El-Sheikh, Keiley, Erath & Dyer, 2013). Exposure to marital conflict has been shown to increase both internalizing and externalizing behaviours, and impact a child's daily functioning. Furthermore, inter-parental conflict has been related to deficits in socio-emotional skills and poorer academic performance in school (Cummings & Davies, 2011). Studies have investigated how several specific conflict tactics such as threats, non-verbal hostility, physical distress, and marital withdrawal provoked diverse emotional responses from by-standing children during every day inter-parental conflict (Cummings, Goek-Morell & Papp, 2016).

Cumulative Risk

Developmental research supports that idea that an accumulation of risk factors leads to child and adolescent behavioural problems (Browne, Leckie, Prime, Perlman & Jenkins, 2016; Meunier, Boyle, O'Connor & Jenkins, 2013). Forehand and colleagues (1998) reported that the number of risk factors predicted adolescent difficulties in adjustment, regardless of risk type. Furthermore, they showed that a sharp increase in adjustment difficulties was seen when risk numbers increased from three to four. This supports earlier work that there may be a "trigger point" where cumulative risk has more harmful effects (Rutter, 1979).

Thus the degree of each risk effect in isolation may be comparatively small



but the additive effects are significant. Consequently, assessing the multiple contributing factors as a cumulative risk index can be more informative. Such cumulative risk indices can help identify 'at-risk' families for enhanced dissemination of interventions and increased parental engagement within early childhood education settings.

Early Interventions

Early prevention and identification strategies can increase a child's exposure to a secure, consistent, nurturing and caring environment, including positive parent-child relationships. Providing sufficient support to parents and families, both in terms of parental training and social support, as well as early identification of families that are high risk (Prime et al., 2015), has been shown to safeguard against some of the adverse effects of stress. Home visiting, parent training, and early education programs have been shown to be important because they help strengthen families through support and education. The companion article in this journal provides insights and strategies on how early childhood educators may play an instrumental part in supporting families and children at risk.

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The Impact of Parenting on Child Outcomes: What Early Childhood Educators Need to Know

by **Michelle Rodrigues, M.A.**

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Overview

Research on the influence of parenting on child development is only effective in changing outcomes insofar as it is accessible and applied to environments where children are present, such as early child education settings. The awareness of those who work front line, such as the Early Childhood Educators (ECE), is essential to make a positive impact on children and their families who may be at risk. It has been demonstrated that ECEs are crucial members of a child's early environment and hence, play an important role in their development,

which makes knowledge mobilization to this group of professionals necessary and crucial (Yoshikawa et al., 2013).

Early Identification and Referral for Services

Challenges in parenting due to factors such as low socioeconomic status, marital conflict, maternal depression, teen motherhood, and mental health issues are associated with poor child developmental outcomes including socio-emotional problems, delays in language development, and poorer

academic achievement, as discussed in the companion article this section. Importantly, these outcomes have a negative impact on adolescent and adult functioning, highlighting the significance of early identification and referral for services by ECEs and other professionals. Given the amount of time children spend in early education settings, ECEs are in a unique position to identify children who may exhibit emerging symptoms of mental illness such as anxiety, inattention, and poor self-regulation (Martoccio, Brophy-Herb, & Onaga, 2014). Children and families can then be referred to parenting intervention programs such as the Incredible Years (Weeland et al, 2017), which provides opportunities for enhancing parenting skills, positive child behaviour, and parent-child relationships. Such programs are associated with lower levels of parental stress, increased empathy toward children, and greater family support, which is linked to improved child adjustment and outcome (Mortensen & Mastergeorge, 2014; Weeland et al, 2017). Furthermore, ECEs are an important gateway linking parents to community resources where they can access the support needed (Weiss, Caspe, & Lopez, 2006). By connecting parents with the support services in their communities such as online resources, programs, and workshops, families can



develop a broad network that can serve as useful support systems throughout their child's early years and beyond (Weiss et al., 2006).

Early identification and referral for services is critical as interventions that occur early in life are far more effective than those administered later (Heckman, 2008; Heckman, Moon, Pinto, Savelyev, & Yavitz, 2010). Positive intervention outcomes are more likely when the intervention occurs early when developmental outcomes can be modified.

ECE Responsivity

Factors such as depression and other mental health issues are associated with less responsive parenting, harsher disciplinary practices and poorer outcomes for the children (Brennan, Hammen, Anderson, Bor, Najman & Williams, 2000; Goodman, 2011). High quality responsive and nurturing adult-child interactions in child care or early learning settings may buffer some of the effects of strained parenting (Merritt & Klein, 2016). For instance, when ECEs interact with children in a warm and contingent manner, characterized by consistent responsivity to children's physical and emotional needs, children show improved outcomes (Merritt & Klein, 2016). A warm and responsive interaction style, coupled with dialogues with the child has been shown to enhance learning abilities across multiple domains (Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Such interaction styles are also beneficial for children's cognitive, social, and behavioural outcomes (Yoshikawa et al., 2013). Additionally, positive guidance methods, including establishing clear expectations, using genuine praise, providing emotional support, offering children responsibility and choices, and high levels of behavioural monitoring, are associated with improved child behaviour and learning.

ECE Cognitive Sensitivity

Contextual factors such as low socioeconomic status, maternal depression, and marital conflict may negatively impact parenting quality and thus, have consequences for children's cognitive outcomes. For example, research suggests an association between socioeconomic status, low maternal cognitive sensitivity, and reduced child vocabulary and reading abilities (Prime et al., 2015). Cognitive sensitivity refers to the extent to which an individual responds to a child's knowledge and abilities when engaged in an interaction (Prime et al., 2015; Prime, Perlman, Tackett, & Jenkins, 2014a). Individuals who exhibit cognitive sensitivity promote mutual and positive interactions, adjust their behaviour according to what children need, and provide clear verbal and non-verbal directions (Prime et al., 2015; Prime, Perlman, Tackett, & Jenkins, 2014a). There is evidence that older siblings' cognitive sensitivity protects children at risk of poor receptive vocabulary (Prime, Pauker, Plamondon, Perlman, & Jenkins, 2014b). Like parents and older siblings, ECEs can promote cognitive sensitivity while engaging in play by using clear and specific language, positive non-verbal directions, adjusting their language according to children's needs and developmental level, and using positive reinforcement in daily interactions. This may in turn protect children who may be at risk for poor language and cognitive development (Prime, Plamondon, Pauker, Perlman, & Jenkins, 2016).

Parent Engagement With ECE

The preschool period is an optimal time to promote parent-educator relationships so that parents may experience the support needed to limit the stresses that may be associated with transition from

child care to the school system; both for the parent and for the child. This can also set the stage for parent engagement throughout a child's education (Weiss, Caspe, & Lopez, 2006). Parents benefit from genuine relationships where they are invited to work collaboratively with ECEs to support children's learning and healthy development (Ma, Shen, Krenn, Hu & Yuan, 2016). To facilitate parent engagement, ECEs can communicate with parents regularly about their children's learning and behavioural patterns and provide opportunities for parents to visit the centre and assist in the planning of children's activities. Additionally, ECEs can encourage parents to take an active role in their children's learning by suggesting strategies for play and encourage shared book reading. Parental engagement during this transitory phase can improve their perceptions of social support. In high risk situations, such support is associated with less depressive symptoms, increase in positive parenting practices and improved child outcome (Mu et al., 2016; Pianta & Ball, 1993). Engaging parents in their child's learning improves language, social and school readiness skills, as well as reduces behavioural problems (Sheridan, Knoche, Edwards, Bovaird, Kupzyk, 2010). Interestingly, parent engagement in early education settings helps protect against the negative effects of poverty on child outcome (Clements, Reynolds, & Hickey, 2004).

Respecting Diversity in Parenting Practice

Reflective educators recognize parents as experts in their child's needs and development and are sensitive to the diversity in parenting practices. Since the parent's own psychological and emotional functioning, quality of intimate relationships, and the amount of social support they may have influences their parenting practices, the

ECEs must demonstrate sensitivity in approaching parents when providing valuable support and resources. Most parents want what is best for their child, but often may struggle in delivering warm, responsive, and consistent parenting when they have a high allostatic load (accumulation of multiple stress factors). ECEs can create and provide an environment where parents feel welcome, safe, and can therefore benefit from engaging in their child's learning.

Conclusion

In summary, compromised parenting practices have implications on both short and long-term developmental outcomes. In Canada, a high proportion of children spend a significant amount of time in early education settings (Akbari & McCuaig, 2014) and no other professional has the opportunity to work so closely with children and families at such a critical period in development. Therefore, mobilizing research related to the influences of parenting can help support ECEs in their work in supporting children and families. Through early identification and referral for services, promotion of affective and cognitive sensitivity in teacher-child interactions in the classroom, and engagement of parents in children's early education, children can be given the best start in life. With the assistance of reflective practitioners, children are more likely to succeed and this may have important implications not only for the children, but for society at large.

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The Heart of the Matter

**Dialogue among our Champion
Early Childhood Educators and
CCCF Founders**



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

CCCF and Child Care Leaders Across Canada Speak their Mind After 30 years... How is Child Care in Canada Doing and Where to Next?



Rants among our Champion Early Childhood Educators and CCCF Founders

For our 30th anniversary issue of *Interaction* and CCCF, we asked some of CCCF's founders and leaders in child care across Canada to argue, rant, rave, and discuss child care issues and directions for our sector.

For *Interaction* we would like to see some passionate discussions in the form of a written e-mail exchange or blog that goes back and forth between two CCCF founders or ELCC leaders in Canada that we at CCCF have chosen. This is your chance to discuss, rant or argue your opinions and perspective on a particular issue on child care in Canada.

Hear from the five pairs as they speak up in e-mail exchanges: Don Giesbrecht and Kalyniuk; Pat Wege and Emily Mliczeko; Christopher Smith and Marni Flaherty; Nicki Dublenko and Sandra Griffin; Sonya Hooper and Karen Chandler.

We asked:

Thirty years ago child care wasn't on the agenda of every major political party in Canada. All of us working together over those thirty years put child care on those agendas.

In your opinion, how are we doing now?

Why have we not yet achieved the national early learning and child care system we have wanted from the beginning?

What culture shift needs to take place in Canada's collective conscience, to make quality child care a key fundamental and systemic priority?



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Pat Wege and Emily Mliczko Go Back and Forth about why we have not yet achieved the national child system we have been working on for so 30 years. Culture Shift or Political Will?



Pat Wege

Executive Director, Manitoba Child Care Association Inc (MCCA)



Emily Mliczko

Executive Director, Early Childhood Educators of B.C.

Pat Wege:

Hi Emily,

This is my 41st year in child care, so I can look back and marvel at how far we have come. But when I look through old MCCA publications or news articles from days gone by, I am reminded that the core challenges are still a problem. Most provinces/territories continue to have a substantial gap between supply for licensed child care and demand; affordability is an issue for parents and for governments; the workforce continues to be underpaid, and the system grows, floats, or sinks due to changes in leadership at provincial and federal levels.

A big change for me personally is that I no longer feel I have to justify or defend the need for child care services. My mothers' generation was the last that were primarily stay at home mom's. Most of the last 2 generations of moms and dads have been in child care and/or have used it for their own kids so are well aware that it's an essential public service in the 21st century.

And here in Manitoba we have the facts to prove it. MCCA recently partnered with Probe Research to conduct a number of surveys including the public, parents, the child care workforce, and business leaders. Results confirm there is substantial support for child care as a service with 83% of Manitobans saying the lack of child care is a very serious or somewhat serious issue, and 76% saying a universal child care system should be a priority

for the provincial government. And 64% of the public agree that child care should be considered part of the education system. Even business leaders are on board, with 76% saying the lack of child care in Manitoba is a serious issue. I think all these statistics point to an enormous shift in public opinion that has taken place and we now have the critical mass of support we need to feel confident that everyone knows that child care matters. It really is true, as the National Council of Welfare stated in 1999, that "many social programs support families, but child care is the backbone of them all".

Provincial and federal governments develop public policy primarily targeted to senior voters, and pay far less attention to the distinct family needs and priorities of parents in their 20's, 30's and 40's. And that approach explains why child care is so far behind. In Manitoba, the average wait for a licensed space is 14 – 15 months. Also, 61% of parents reported waiting for a space, 30% have turned down a job, 41% delayed returning to work, and 24% declined an educational opportunity due to a lack of child care. Another 51% said the worst thing about child care is the stress of wait lists. Canadian parents continue to struggle with affordability, especially as most provinces are without a fee cap, and many rely on for profit operators to provide spaces. Even though Manitoba has the 2nd lowest fees in Canada only 31% of parents in the MCCA/Probe Research poll reported child care fees are affordable. So far, the newly elected provincial government has continued to provide financial assistance in the form of an operating grant paid directly to the not for profit



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

centres and licensed homes as well as an additional subsidy for low income families. That could change in the blink of an eye as we all have examples of how a change in government erases progress. In 2015, our provincial NDP vowed to provide universal child care and struck a Commission on Early Learning and Child Care to develop a roadmap. All that fell off the table during the 2016 provincial election which brought a change in government. It feels eerily similar to 2005, when the federal Liberals signed funding agreements with all provinces and territories and provided funds to launch the beginnings of a national child care program. All that was wiped out by Conservatives immediately after the 2006 federal election. It sometimes feels like for every step forward, we fall two steps backwards.

I think the biggest barrier to a national early learning and child care system is not the need for a culture shift. We have the evidence. We have the expertise. We know there is a need. What we don't have is enough political will. Elect the right government with the right leaders with the right opinions and it will happen. Governments find money for things they think are important and choose to invest in.

The decision to NOT introduce universal child care, to NOT have a national child care program, to NOT adequately fund programs, or to address fair wages, ... are also government policy decisions.

Emily's response to Pat:

I agree with Pat, my Manitoban colleague, in all the points she raises.

I have also seen many cultural changes over the years, some of these have been very positive. One of the biggest impacts is how we view the image of the child, the educator and the importance of environment – all areas essential to high quality programs. We have seen the increased use of pedagogy that explores deeper meaning and children's understanding and competence. Even with these positive changes, accessing affordable high quality child care continues to be a barrier for many families throughout British Columbia and Canada.

Pat: I think the biggest barrier to a national early learning and child care system is not the need for a culture shift. We have the evidence. We have the expertise. We know there is a need. What we don't have is enough political will. Elect the right government with the right leaders with the right opinions and it will happen. Governments find money for things they think are important and choose to invest in.

Scientific research and data such as brain development, EDI, impacts of childhood poverty and importance of high quality experiences all contribute to give a deeper knowledge of the importance of the early years that have reached the public's [awareness]. Although this has led to some recognition which has translated into some forward steps at both a provincial and federal level, it isn't nearly enough to deal with the current child care crisis. As young families enter into this stage of their lives they are often unaware that their options are limited or that the cost of child care can cost almost as much as their housing.

Since 2011 ECEBC and Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC have been advancing the Community Plan for Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning, also known as the \$10aDay Plan. This comprehensive plan will ensure children and families will have access to affordable quality child care. ECEs will benefit from the increased respect, remuneration, and professionalism they deserve for the valuable contribution they make to the lives of children and families. Since its release, the Plan itself has gained support of more than 2 million British Columbians. Polls and research have confirmed over and over the support for the Plan and the economic stimulus it will have.

One last area I would like to highlight that is needed to make a cultural shift is within the ECE community itself. This sector, every day, shows great leadership in the way they communicate, guide and engage with children and how they advocate for families. It's a sector that cares deeply about the impact they have on community and holds their education and ethics deep in their professional lives. I believe we need to empower and support the Early Childhood Sector with tools to be a strong voice, that they are represented at all tables within the community, that their expertise is sought out. We need to see more ECEs take political positions in municipal, provincial and federal roles.

Pat isn't done yet . . .

It is true that the work of some of Canada's finest researchers and early childhood advocates, such as the late Dr. Fraser Mustard and Dr. Clyde Hertzman, have helped shape public



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

opinion and provided a much higher profile for the importance of the early years on healthy child outcomes. I think there is plenty of evidence that the work of ECEs is far more valued and respected now. For example, the Manitoba public (64%) and parents (75%) both agree that child care should be part of the education system and there is a very high level of support for licensing of child care. Manitoba parents ranked educational programs and activities, warm, caring, and educated staff as the three most important qualities when choosing a child care facility.

However, challenges remain to ensure government policy decisions reflect the research that shows good child care educates and well trained early childhood educators (ECEs) are essential to quality. On the one hand, the Manitoba government has invested heavily in new ECE training programs, even providing staff replacement grants for those in workplace training, annual training grants for Child Care Assistants, Family Child Care Providers, and ECE II's to upgrade their credentials. We have

a lot of great initiatives to help the sector improve their qualifications. However, compensation remains below market with 71% of Directors worried about paying competitive wages, with the end result that family child care turnover is very high and a whopping 49% of child care centers have operated without the Early Childhood Educators required by provincial legislation.

I agree that we need ECEs to be active in local, provincial, and federal politics. I am proud that, in spite of so many challenges, Manitoba's early childhood educators remain engaged and enthusiastic about their work and continue to upgrade their qualifications with 86% participating in professional development. Many have also embarked on a pedagogical journey that continues to evolve, strengthen, and grow as practitioners come together regularly at MCCA sponsored institutes and meetings to reflect, share insights, strengthen their practice, and learn new ways of understanding children.

Christopher Smith and Marni Flaherty discuss the complex economic and political climate in Canada that holds back our progress VS how basic the solution can be – simply speaking, in home child care and larger public systems



Marni Flaherty

Chief Executive Officer, Today's
Family Early Learning and Child Care



Christopher Smith

Assistant Executive Director,
The Muttart Foundation

Marni:

Hello Christopher Smith,

I am looking forward to your reaction of the attached *Toronto Star* Article, February 25, 2017 *Licensing for home daycares provides oversight, accountability and peace of mind for parents, advocates say.*

Licensed Home Child Care is the answer to many families' child care needs. It is in neighbourhoods. It is close to schools. It allows for multi age groups to be together. It is perfect for overnight and shift care. It is an intimate environment, conducive for relaxation. All we need is health and safety support, oversight and quality assurance.



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Why is this so hard for the public to understand?!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Over to you Chris. Looking forward to your rant!

Christopher's First response to Marni's prompting with an article on home child care in the news:

I am indebted to Marni for starting our discussion by sending me a recent article from the Toronto Star: '*Advocates push for licensing of home day cares*'. The piece likely slipped by the more casual reader. But for parents desperately seeking child care, and for those who have dedicated their professional lives to the field, it highlights the challenges families continue to face in accessing the affordable, high-quality early learning and care they need and want.

Written by a long-time journalist sensitive to the complexities and politics of the field, the article lays bare the paucity of the choices many parents face, reminds us all of the vulnerability of very young children, raises questions of what we should expect from those adults to whom we entrust the care of our children, and challenges the current dividing line between what we accept and understand as private matters or interests and those things that we value so greatly that we elevate them to the realm of the public and the collective in their reach, intention and well-being.

Since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women first called for a national child care program in 1970, much has changed both within the field itself and beyond it in the political, cultural, and economic contexts in which early learning and care is considered and understood. And while the current discussion cannot unravel fully the Gordian knot of early learning and care, it is a venue to muse on where we find ourselves in advancing the field; why progress has proven so difficult; and what shifts (cultural and otherwise) are needed before we arrive in the 'promised land'.

So, where we are (or how are doing)? Well, we are perhaps at another crossroads. And, somewhat similar to Alice standing in front of the Cheshire Cat, we will be called upon to make choices (again) on where we want to go. The pending National Early Learning and Care Framework proposed by the Liberal Government, to be negotiated with the provinces, territories and Indigenous peoples, provides another opportunity to advance change; although the proposed new public investments are modest.

Much has changed since the heady days of 2005, when a national early learning and care strategy was within reach. And,

while the disappointments of its cynical culling have left their mark, there is a sense that the early learning and care field, and provincial and territorial governments, in the main, are now better positioned to advance the interests of children and their families than they were a decade ago. There is a deeper understanding of the complexity of the field, technically and culturally; a stronger grasp of the public benefits to which early learning and care contributes (if done well); and an emerging cohort of stakeholders who have benefited from the intellectual heritage and passions of the pioneers of the field.

So why is progress so difficult to achieve? Well, it's a combination of complexity and inertia. Early learning and care remains, at its essence, a meeting ground for different traditions. It brings together ideas and ideals from the fields of education and care, both of which are infused with differing values and competing understandings. What are the larger goals and purposes of education and caring, for example? How are these reframed when we consider the well-being of very young children and their families? What works and what does not work in terms of pedagogy? And what are the dividing lines between public and private responsibilities?

Answering these questions is not simply a matter of summing the balance of the evidence. There are deeply held views, personal experiences and the political realities of modern societies, or economies as they are increasingly cast, to consider and contend with. For governments contemplating change, this is a heady political mix that raises the stakes for both action and inaction. There is significant inertia to overcome and complicated, messy service landscapes to re-engineer. This is not the realm for the politically faint of heart. It demands the kind of leadership that has been absent from recent federal and some provincial/territorial governments. Simply, mailing in a cheque will not suffice. There is political capital that must be expended and stakeholders who must be consulted and engaged in a legitimate democratic process.

Which raises the small matter of the cultural shifts required to advance real change. And this is perhaps the heart of the challenge – which both compels the reason for change on the one hand, while also highlighting the difficulties of moving forward on the other. At the end of the day, early learning and care remains caught within the larger political and cultural web of Canadian social policy. Thus, while a large body of research argues persuasively for moving away from a reliance on markets to shape the organization, financing and delivery of services – such thinking runs counter to the prevailing political doctrines which champion market approaches, individualism, and the need to limit or restrain public expenditure.



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The commitment to children as rights holders (citizens), to early education and care as a public good, and to public infrastructure as the cornerstone for individual and collective well-being remains at odds with the growing ‘fiscalization’ of social policy. Modest income transfers to families, tax deductions, and tax credits are not sufficient on their own to address the changing nature of family lives, the uncertainties of modern labour markets, the rapidly growing care deficit and the complex childhoods of our youngest citizens. It’s a reengineered public character and face that is the order of the day, and until this idea is fully embraced, advancing the early learning and care of youngest citizens and their families will remain a decidedly Sisyphean endeavour.

Marni’s Second Response:

Well said Chris! It would be wonderful if the general public understood the following points that you mentioned:

- the proposed new public investments are modest
- the heady political mix
- a sense that the early learning and care field, and provincial and territorial governments, in the main, are better positioned to advance the interests of children and their families
- reengineered public character and face that is the order of the day, and until this idea is fully embraced...

Let’s for fun imagine that we could lead the change. If we took one big step forward together. Not perfect, but one heck of a lot better than what we have now. What could it look like in 5 years?

Simply speaking:

- Every community in Canada had enough licensed child care spaces for 25 or even 50 per cent of its population of children 0-6 years
- Parents would pay no more than \$25 per space
- Qualified Early Childhood Educators would be paid no less than \$25 dollars per hour

Of course, there would be guiding principles addressing, quality, flexibility for families and planning with all levels of government.

Just saying.

Christopher’s Second Response:

Marni, thank you for ‘landing’ our discussion on the concrete changes that would improve families’ access to high-quality, affordable early learning and care. There is much to be said for the early learning and care field working in partnership with the different levels of governments to identify the key changes required to advance services that are in the best interests of children and their families.

The goals you outline above in terms of access, affordability and quality represent, as early learning and care stakeholders know all too well, the ‘holy trinity’ of the field; indivisible in their contribution to the well-being of young children and their families. All too often, however, it seems that governments respond to political pressures to address the first and second of these aspects while neglecting the third or recasting it in a narrower fashion – ‘school readiness’, for example.

Thus, calls for an increase in child care spaces are commonly coupled with demands that child care be more affordable, with quality (perhaps the most critical dimension of the three) left somewhat behind. While this two-out-of-three-approach is understandable as a response to political pressures it ultimately fails to meet the complex needs of children and families (especially those who are the most vulnerable) and further limits the very nature of the public benefits to which early learning and care contributes.

Early Learning and care organized, financed and delivered in ways that emphasize access, affordability and quality contributes to a range of public benefits as the Childcare Resource and Research Centre (among others) has noted. Early childhood development, support for parents balancing the demands of work inside and outside of the home, women’s equality and equity of opportunity and social cohesion and senses of community all flow from well-considered, and well-resourced early learning and care. And, while one must exercise some caution in labelling early learning and care a wonder program or service, it forms a mainstay of contemporary social and economic policy – something the Scandinavian countries recognized over a generation ago.

The key is a shared vision for early learning and care which encompasses these various benefits accompanied by a plan for how to make that vision a reality in the lives of young children and their families – no matter what their household income, where they live or the structure or composition of their family.

Too often it seems, however, that this shared vision becomes lost, blurred or diminished, and the plan for collective action subsumed by political battles or cultural struggles around particular aspects or dimensions of services. Keeping an elevated gaze is hard in a field where the complexity of services can be all too readily reduced or watered down, or even subverted for other political purposes or gains.

High-quality, affordable, accessible early learning and care is a basic requirement for today’s families. And the good news is that the benefits it brings extend to us all.



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Sonya Hooper and Karen Chandler talk about practitioners as leaders as recognized professionals



Karen Chandler

Professor in the School of Early Childhood Education, George Brown College in the ECE and Leadership Programs



Sonya Hooper

Executive Director, Early Childhood Development Association of PEI

Karen begins:

Hi Sonya,

Good to connect. My thoughts on our dialogue is to focus from the practitioner/leader perspective as I feel there has been a lot of change over the past 30 years.

First of all the field has grown immensely in many ways – size, complexity and certainly in accountability.

From my recollection, the sector primarily focused on direct work with children as reflected in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model in the microsystem. I'm sure in perusing back issues of *Interaction* there is a lot of content on curriculum in the broadest sense. While curriculum continues to be an important focus for the sector, practitioners are now held more accountable for curriculum and how it facilitates children's learning – to parents through learning stories and other means of communications – but more importantly educators are accountable for communicating about the children's learning. In *Ontario's Child Care and Early Years Act*, this accountability to parents is identified as required.

Following along this vein, EC practitioners must ensure they reflect their provincial government's curriculum framework, in Ontario *How Does Learning Happen?* through their work with children. This tracking is part of the licensing process. In the past, the licensing consultants attained information about the program's curriculum from speaking with the supervisor. Now, each practitioner is responsible for discussing how their room is meeting the province's curriculum requirements.

All this is good, yet it is one example of the increased expectations for programs as well as EC practitioners for pedagogy whereas in the past, licensing primarily focused on health and safety standards.

I am sure you have thoughts on this and how it is playing out in PEI.

Sonya Hooper's Response:

Hi Karen, I hope this finds you well. I do agree change is fast paced, and broad reaching across all aspects of the ELCC system!! So much to discuss!!

PEI Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture holds centres with the 'Early Years Centre' designation accountable to the PEI Early Learning Framework, and require them to provide evidence to document children's learning journey – as you say through learning stories, documentation and other means of communication including more formalized parent teacher sharing sessions.

The advancement of early learning frameworks across early childhood systems in Canada brings forward two matters for me – both notions I explore regularly with members, but have not come to any significant epiphany.

PEI has what I would refer to as a staggered certification, which I believe is similar to other jurisdictions; The PEI Early Learning and Child Care Board provide various levels of certification, but for this example ECE level 1, ECE level 2, and ECE level 3 require an increase in education ranging from one 30-hour course



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to a 2-year diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education as approved by the Board.

It is common practice in PEI that legislation does not require everyone planning and facilitating programs with young children in licensed ELCC centres to hold a level 3 certification (hold a minimum of a two-year diploma); and I think it is fair to say that much of the country has the same struggle. The debate I suppose is around the question of: *is this justified?*

However, there is little distinction in the roles and responsibilities ECE's 1-3 are assigned within centres. Most of the time, this means ECEs of varying training levels are expected to deliver equally on the same job description and framework. A level 1 ECE with one 30-hour course is expected to create an emergent learning environment (inside and out) that reflects the goals and objectives of the provincial early learning framework, while documenting each child's progress and communicating to families the links between those playful experiences and the learning that is transpiring.

Is it possible for a person with one 30-hour course to plan, facilitate, document and communicate learning outcomes with equal depth and understanding as the person with the two-year diploma or degree?

Which leads to my next thought: what is the work of early childhood educators? How is this work unique from what babysitters or parents do? We often hear and say—this work takes a specialized bank of knowledge – but what is it? And until we can define this (and own it), and set standards to uphold it, will we ever get to where it is we wish to be as recognized professionals?

Look forward to hearing back from you! Sonya

Karen has something to add to the discussion:

Hi Sonya

Good to meet you

There are a number of parallels here in Ontario to your experience in PEI with the raising the bar of expectations though

Sonya: Is it possible for a person with one 30-hour course to plan, facilitate, document and communicate learning outcomes with equal depth and understanding as the person with the two-year diploma or degree?

legislation (Child Care and Early Years Act) as well as following required provincial pedagogy, How Does learning Happen?

While the recent regulations did not raise the bar on qualifications, there are many ECEs who hold degrees. Ryerson has been awarding degrees since the '70s. Many other post-secondary educational institutions: Seneca, Humber, Brock, Guelph, York and George Brown to name a few offer such degrees. So there is no need to suppress the qualifications, particularly

for supervisors. Here in Ontario, it is a diploma with 2 years' experience as it was in 1982. At George Brown, where I teach, we have a 4-year leadership degree. Many graduates choose to continue with a Masters and often look to work in research rather than bringing their expertise to child care.

One major difference is the College of ECE that began in 2007, has almost 60,000 members. One cannot call them self an ECE nor practice without being a member. We have a defined scope of practice and are undergoing revisions to the standards of practice and code of ethics which will be finalized in June. The college has had a transformative impact on the field. ECEs are required to demonstrate their involvement in upgrading through the Continuous Learning project. These initiatives have led to more professional development opportunities and establishment of communities of practice.

The college disciplines ECEs who do not meet the standards of practice and code of ethics. I have served as an expert witness on a few of these cases. These are primarily in the areas of supervision and poor guidance strategies. These documents outline what ECEs do and are accountable for, which differs from parents/caregivers.

The province is working to raise the wages by providing increases each year in an effort to stop the drain to full day kindergarten. One area really needing improvement is improving the working conditions for those who work in Full Day Kindergarten, as they are paid for 10 months versus 12 months for kindergarten teachers. Also, they are only paid for a shorter day and have fewer benefits. The unions need to improve the collective bargaining.

I believe the structure of Kindergarten is much different in PEI

Karen



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Don Giesbrecht and April Kalyniuk — who is more optimistic about now and the future?



Don Giesbrecht

CEO CCCF, past President of the CCCF Board



April Kalyniuk

Executive Director, Lord Roberts Children's Program in Winnipeg. Over 13 years, April served the CCCF on Member Council, the Board and as Chair of CCCF's Board.

Don:

I am always conscious that when I say this, I am dragging us back into a time that elicits some painful memories, or at the least, memories of what could have been. Quite frankly, 11 plus years have passed since the Dryden/Martin agreements and I really should get over it, which I actually have, but I still use these agreements as the backdrop to what is happening today.

We have reason for optimism. After 11 years of no action and leadership from the federal government on child care, we have a federal government that is interested and in fact, has committed funds—\$7.5B—to the provinces and territories, which includes specific funding for Indigenous child care, both on and off reserve, and for research and innovation.

The funding starts this fiscal year with the signing of the Multi-Lateral Framework agreement and will be further defined via the soon to be completed bi-lateral agreements with each of the provinces and territories. It's not the \$5B over 5 years Dryden/Martin plan in 2005, but hey, we have to start somewhere. And to be fair, over the past 11 years, Canada has seen some provinces step up and (try) to build child care systems on their own. Kudos to them.

April

Weeee!!!!...I am not as optimistic as you Don. But that may be from where I am sitting right now. I have serious concerns about where the money the federal government is promising will end up here in Sunny Manitoba. You are so correct in stating that after 10 years of no action and leadership from the Feds that the money flowing will be useful, but I believe it really needs to be

targeted to the federal government's vision for a National Child Care Program—and I do not believe we have heard what this is yet.

I believe that we have not made the progress over 30 years that could have been made had the Early Learning and Child Care Portfolio been made a national program like Medicare. Something with clear guidelines for the provinces when taking dollars along with how the spending should occur and with clear expectations for outcomes. When money comes and is left to each province to determine how and what they believe the priority is for ELCC, it creates a system that changes on the ideological beliefs of the provincial government of the day and leaves the providers of the service wondering, from government to government, what comes next—feast or famine?

Don

You touch on many excellent points—and I agree with you. My optimism springs from actually having a seat at the federal table again, but your concerns are very real. I find it so interesting that in Canada, we have taken, for the most part, a real hands off approach to early learning and care. Personal issue rather than societal good completely flies in the face of how we approach almost every other demographic of our society. When I get the opportunity to speak at conferences and to ECE students across Canada, I tell the story about how, when my father needed care outside of the home, we did not have to go onto Kijiji or walk up and down our street looking for someone to care for him. There was a system that we could access and I will add, it was an affordable and very caring system. We did not consider finding care for him a matter of luck or lottery, it was built into the fabric of our—and others—expectations of services.



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On the issue of what to expect of the Feds, I agree with you that there should be a robust agreement or framework in place. The federal government has the “spending” power and should use it to elevate the level of service and to build systems for children. Enough of this piecemeal approach. Good grief, this is about the wellbeing of children. Canadian children and families deserve access to high quality, affordable, inclusive and accessible child care. The CCCF was proud to work with our national partners the CCAAC, CRRU and Campaign 2000 in setting out such a vision in our Shared Framework document. It is aspirational, but also rooted in evidence and best practice. On that, we really need some political champions, at all levels.

April

Agreed! I also think that there needs to be consistency throughout the country-wide regulations and rules that lend themselves to consistency for families so they know what to expect from Newfoundland/Labrador to British Columbia and everywhere in between. Best practice in Manitoba should look like Best practice across the country taking into consideration individual quirks and recognizing diversity.

And speaking of diversity, with the world in the state it is there should be some federal leadership on programs for ELCC for the immigrant and refugee families that are arriving daily. The regular systems in the provinces already have huge waitlists so adding to your comment that Canadian children and families deserve access to high quality, affordable, inclusive and accessible child care, I would suggest that all children and families entering our country deserve this and I wonder how prepared we are?

As I have been in the field for over 30 years I have seen many things change, but many things have not moved forward as much as one would hope—I really believed in the agreements that almost happened (was it really 11 years ago) and cannot help but wonder where we would be now had they gone through.

Don

That is a nice segue to talking about why we have not moved, as a sector, as far forward as we would have hoped, after all, it

Don: Why does Canada lag behind so many other nations as it pertains to children, child care and investments/supports for both? The evidence is clear and abundant as to why it is important to have high-quality child care and supports for families, yet we still struggle with this reality.

is 2017. Why does Canada lag behind so many other nations as it pertains to children, child care and investments/supports for both? The evidence is clear and abundant as to why it is important to have high-quality child care and supports for families, yet we still struggle with this reality. The current federal government talks about supports for the middle class, for women and the economic security of Canadian families. We have a self-confessed feminist Prime Minister, so if that is true, wouldn't child care be a priority? I would think so. “Because it's 2015” seems a little hollow right now—I

say not wanting to burst the optimist bubble I have tried to take. Do you think that people understand that when they criticize public spending/investments in young children that they are in fact talking about the well-being of children? I wonder about that. Canada needs political champions that have the will and determination to make child care a public expectation rather than a private lottery win.

April

No argument from this part on that! I am not sure who those champions would be but I know for a fact that every parent that has used or is using child care understands this — however they certainly all look to the day when they no longer have to pay child care costs. Perhaps if child care was part of the education continuum and was funded and taxed in a similar manner, we would move ahead from the patch-work system it is now with better paid staff and better quality for all.

Don

The road maps to building comprehensive systems are there. PEI has built a very good system (note that I didn't say perfect) and the Manitoba Early Years and Child Care Commission report is another excellent piece of work that charts the way to system building. In reference to those achievements, Kathleen Flanagan and Jane Beach are exceptional at what they do. However, while reports and recommendations are great, what we need is political will, which of course relates to political champions. If governments want to build child care systems, there has to be political will to do so. Period. I believe that we will get there, someday, but we still have work to do. I know, as you have said, it's been a lot of years, but now is not the time to stop the work we have done and focus in on the work that has to be done.



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Nicki Dublenko and Sandra Griffin argue whether to communicate the complexity of early learning systems or simplicity of its importance to politicians and the public when advocating for a national child care framework



Nicki Dublenko

Executive Director Child Development Dayhomes, Past Chair of Alberta Child Care Association and CCCF Member Council



Sandra Griffin

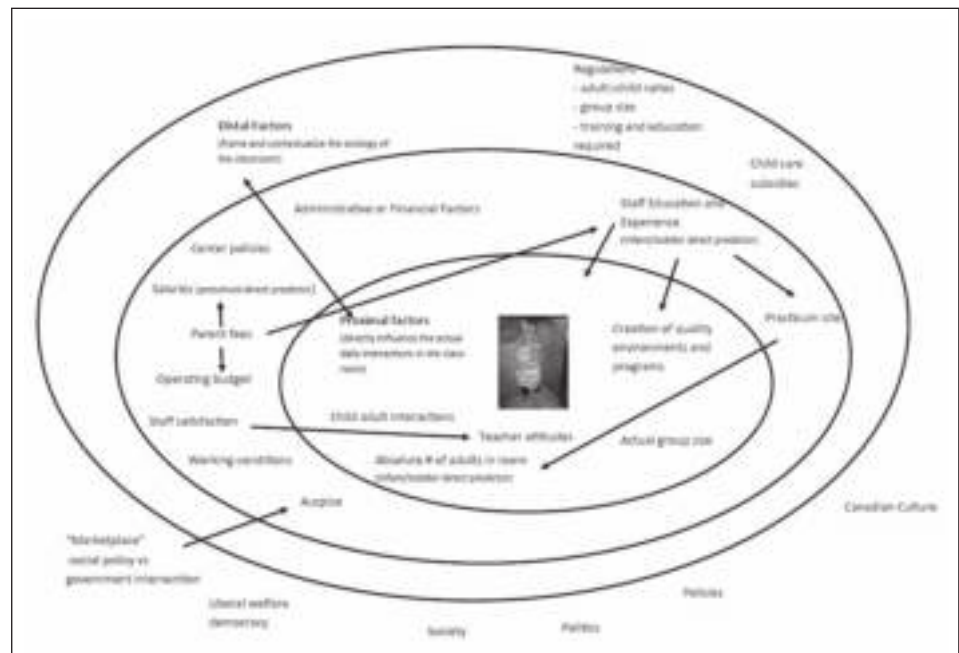
Founding member of the CCCF in 1987 and past CCCF Board member

Nicki Begins:

From my perspective over the past decade and a half, there seems to be a misunderstanding from policy and decision makers about just how complex the system (or un-system) of early learning and child care really is. ELCC is continually thwarted by politics, political agendas and political terms/timelines. Decisions and changes are often made without looking at the overall comprehensiveness of the approach that is actually needed. For example, we often see space creation initiatives without a simultaneous plan for ensuring these spaces are staffed with an educated and knowledgeable workforce.

Research and experience show us that the number one game changer for ensuring high quality ELCC is by advancing the education and ongoing professional learning of the educators. Therefore, increasing spaces without having a workforce plan will exacerbate our quality issue we're already dealing with.

For my current class, I recently reviewed this article from 2006: Goelman, H., Forer, B., Kershaw, P., Doherty, G., Lero, D., & LaGrange, A. (2006). Towards a predictive model of quality in Canadian child care centers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21(3), 280–295.





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Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological system model, I looked at all the factors influencing the child within a child care program that were identified in this article and created this model - and its complex!

The arrows only show a sample of the connections, when in fact everything is connected in some way. And changing one element of the model influences everything else. Until we start thinking and planning in this way - I think we will see more limping along towards a national framework of early learning and child care for Canada.

And not to beat a dead horse but thinking in this way also requires significant and realistic investment which the current dollars on the table for investing in a system doesn't have.

Your turn! Nicki

Sanda Griffin's Response:

Am I getting old or what?! And is that good or bad?

Summary of Nicki's piece (my bold):

The arrows only show a sample of the connections, **when in fact everything is connected** in some way. And changing one element of the model influences everything else. **Until we start thinking and planning in this way - I think we will see more limping along** towards a national framework of early learning and child care for Canada.

And not to beat a dead horse but thinking in this way also **requires significant and realistic investment** which the current dollars on the table for investing in a system doesn't have.

Thirty years ago, my "young children" were already well into their teens. I had been working in the field of ECE about 15 years, had studied it as an early childhood educator, as a child and youth care worker, as a researcher, an educator, a school trustee, an advocate, a policy maker - and kept coming to the same conclusion: no matter where I looked in the research and in policy and practice - investing in young children really was

Sandra: I am thinking that at some very basic human level, humankind may be craving simplicity in an increasingly complex and always connected world. I think our challenge becomes: what handful of statements, lines really, speak the powerful truth of the importance of the early years? And how do we say them often enough to start to change a world view - because once the paradigm begins to really shift, that is when the complexity can come into play regarding how to build what we need.

the answer for changing the world. Yes - it was complex to describe it from a developmental, social, physical, psychological perspective but all the science essentially pointed in the same direction - what happened to children when they were young had the greatest impact on their entire life trajectory, including how they raised their own children. First Nations people often talk about looking at the impact of any given action over seven generations which so appropriately describes the fundamental powerful shaping of our "self" in relation to our ancestors and our progeny and the thread that runs through the generations.

However, in the many years SINCE that early conclusion 30 years ago, I am increasingly struck by how complexity can overwhelm and create barriers to change while simplicity can

create all the antecedents we need to incite paradigm shifts - and it is within and after these shifts that we can then begin to deal with the complexity, account for the complexity in our planning. But underneath it all, we need to always stay tuned to simplicity.

I recall a colleague who was director of ECE in one of the eastern provinces. She had carefully walked her provincial Minister through all the "facts" regarding early learning and child care, the immediate and long term impacts, why it was such a wise investment. At the end of her presentation, the Minister looked at her and simply said: "I just don't believe it." And made a decision for the province to NOT invest heavily in the area. For the Minister's part, she was thinking about her own years as a young mother: she didn't have the types of services being described, people got by, children grew into adults, and for the most part did okay, - life could be hard but you learned resilience, life went on... And subsequent to hearing this story, I have sat through countless meetings in research, policy and practice and have seen on the faces of people around the table, NOT from the field, that same look: *yeah, yeah, but we do what we can, we can't afford more, kids get by, I did, mine did...*

But of course, everyone isn't "getting by" and we see the toll a challenging and/or poor resourced childhood takes on the life trajectory and no matter which way we turn these complex models, the answer is always really simple: early childhood makes a life time of difference.



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The question becomes HOW do we tell the story simply. Watching with horror as Trump marched through the recent US election throwing out the inane simple throwaway lines about people and how the world works – and kept seeing growing numbers of people attracted to his simple good versus evil, terrorists that go bump in the night, be afraid-be very afraid, alternate fact realities – and it didn't even matter when his numbers or alternate facts did not hold up to basic fact-based scrutiny. The throngs loved the basic simplicity of the message – as awful as the messages were. I am thinking that at some very basic human level, humankind may be craving simplicity in an increasingly complex and always connected world. I think our challenge becomes: what handful of statements, lines really, speak the powerful truth of the importance of the early years? And how do we say them often enough to start to change a world view – because once the paradigm begins to really shift, that is when the complexity can come into play regarding how to build what we need.

When Thomas Kuhn introduced the concept of paradigm shifts in the history of scientific revolution, he particularly noted that science is not cumulative, but rather reflects subterranean shifts in thinking that then interprets phenomenon differently – like a prism, each paradigm absorbs and reflects light differently depending on its cut.

Wikipedia: Kuhn's analysis of the Copernican Revolution emphasized that, in its beginning, it did not offer more accurate predictions of celestial events, such as planetary positions, than the Ptolemaic system, but instead appealed to some practitioners based on a promise of better, simpler, solutions that might be developed at some point in the future [my bold]. Kuhn called the core concepts of an ascendant revolution its "paradigms" and thereby launched this word into widespread analogical use in the second half of the 20th century. Kuhn's insistence that a paradigm shift was a mélange of sociology, enthusiasm and scientific promise, but not a logically determinate procedure [my bold], caused an uproar in reaction to his work.

I think we need the paradigm shift that offers people the **promise of better, simpler solutions**. Offering the logic of current science is not resonating. I think age and experience has blunted the sharp thrust of the sword I once wielded based on scientific knowledge. I believe I am now searching a not logically determined world view for new answers.

Write a Letter to Your 30-year-old-self Martha!

Martha Friendly writes a letter to herself as she was 30 years ago



We asked Martha Friendly to write a letter to her 30 year old self (30 to tie in with our anniversary). Something along the line of: "What I wish I'd known," and "What advice would you give to your 30 year old self about tackling the building of a great child care system and working in the field. The key questions/issues to be focusing on are listed above.

Martha Friendly is the founder and Executive Director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit. She has authored numerous articles, chapters and reports on child care and a book on child care policy, and participates in several child care advocacy groups.

Thirty years ago, Martha Friendly was a 40-ish child care policy researcher, working at getting the Childcare Resource and Research Unit going at the University of Toronto with the support of funds first from the Ontario government and then from the federal government 's Child Care Initiatives' Fund . She was also a parent of two kids (one still in child care) and active as an advocate with what was then the newly-formed "Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association" and the fantastic, now-vanished National Action Committee on the Status of Women ("NAC").

March 8 2017

Dear Young-ish Martha in 1987:

This is me—your future self—writing from the future, which may come as a surprise, as I know you've never put much stock in theparanormal! It may not come as a surprise, though, that in 2017, I'm still a passionate child care policy researcher and advocate—if anything, more than ever.



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

As you are someone who has *already* spent 15 or so years coming to understand how important quality, affordable child care is for women and children and to families' lives every day, you will probably be completely gob smacked to learn that—in 2017—thirty years in the future, your/my grandchildren are still among the minority of kids in Canada (24% of 0-5's) who are lucky enough to be in affordable, terrific child care. I am gob smacked myself when I think about it.

This may be especially astounding and hugely disappointing because you were all so optimistic about Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau's Task Force on Child Care. It was only a year ago—1986—that the visionary 400-page federal report on child care was released with some fanfare on International Women's Day. Calling the child care situation 'critical', it recommended a "national system of child care to be introduced in three stages" that would be as "effective as our systems of health care and education". Publicly-funded and non-profit.

Politics intervened in the form of changes in leadership and political parties. But nevertheless, a national child care program wasn't put in place even when the Liberals returned to power, although there was one pretty good attempt in 2004 (also undone by politics). Indeed, social programs overall have been much-eroded over the past 30 years but especially during what was a "dark decade" for child care that ended only two years ago.

As a feminist, you'll be glad to know that since 1986, more and more mothers of young children have joined the work force, many have gone to medical, law and graduate school and women have entered all sorts of non-traditional professions like firefighting, policing and engineering. Many women—single moms and couples both straight and same-sex (yes, gay marriage is now legal), though, still live in poverty, struggling to pay the rent and feed the kids. In fact, young families are struggling much more than in your time that they've been called "Generation Squeeze"—squeezed by sky-high housing costs in Toronto, student debt (as colleges and universities have much less public support than they did in your time)—and, of course, child care fees have skyrocketed. Overall, income inequality has really grown in Canada and women still earn substantially less than men.

I know that you will remember when our child care fees at York University Co-operative Day Care Centre were \$250 a month in the 1970s(!). At the time, we parents, didn't understand that the staff wages were paid out of the parent fees, as there was no

public funding. But I know that in 1987 you and other child care advocates do understand that child care needs public funding if it is to be high quality and affordable while paying the educators decent wages have been fighting for that.

But I'll bet you won't believe this: in 2017, most child care still operates on a 1970s funding model of very limited public funding to services and those old, ineffective and so-retro "subsidy systems" to cover fees for lucky lower income parents. And because of this, child care fees in 2017 are unaffordable for most families and few child care staff earn what you could call a living wage.

It's difficult for me to believe that so many political leaders still don't get how important child care is for all women and families. Without a child care system, there's a huge gap in families' lives that they have to fill however they can with very little support from Canada. Canada, you probably don't know, is now a G8 country (meaning among the world's wealthiest countries)—and one of the least generous in paying for child care.

So many things that seemed like science fiction in 1987 have become commonplace—cell phones for everyone, drones flying around, self-driving and flying cars and entrepreneurs promising tourist visits to the moon. But despite this, somehow Canada hasn't been able to get it together over the last 30 years to do what many other countries in the world now do—set up a public child care system to make sure that families have the help they need when their kids are young, while making sure that children can thrive at the same time.

To be clear, my 1987 self—I'm not at all saying "give up". Although we can't remake history, maybe we will finally make this happen in the future. Did I mention that another Trudeau—Justin—is now the Prime Minister? Perhaps he'll pull out that old report from the Task Force 30 years ago. He could rename it—"Child care: Now more than ever", or "A national child care program..because it's 2017".

You all keep doing what you're doing—keep thinking about that big party we've all been promising to hold when Canada finally has that national child care program.

We do expect to be holding it in the future.

Warm regards,

Martha in 2017



RESEARCH UPDATE

National child data strategy: Results of a feasibility study

A new report presents the results of a feasibility study that determined the need for a national child data strategy. This report presents the results of a feasibility study, undertaken on behalf of the Lawson Foundation, to determine the need for a national child data strategy. The methodology consisted of an environmental scan of major initiatives on child well-being and sources of child data as well as interviews with selected key informants. The environmental scan and interviews identified five core challenges: data architecture and governance, knowledge gaps, methodological limitations, data collection and contextual issues. While 'strategy' may be too broad, key informants identified strong support for continued work on child data so long as it is clearly defined, does not duplicate existing efforts and is shaped by key players in the field. Read the full study report at <http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/1113ENG.pdf>

Stop the presses! Canadian women do more housework

Statistics Canada issued one of its like-clockwork reminders that women perform far more housework and child care than their male partners. "Changes in parents' participation in domestic tasks and care for children from 1986 to 2015" surveyed opposite-sex and same-sex couples who were married or living common-law with at least one child 17 or younger. It reveals slightly more than three-quarters (76 per cent) of men participated in some form of housework in 2015. That's up from just over one half (51 per cent) almost three decades earlier.

The numbers indicate we're moving to greater equality on the home front—at a glacial pace. In 2015, men spent 2.4 hours per day on average performing household work ("on days when they did such work," as StatsCan put it), compared with 2.0 hours in 1986—an entire 20 minutes more! According to StatsCan, that time increase is driven by men being more likely to prepare meals: some 59 per cent of fathers reported helping to make meals in 2015, up from 29 per cent in 1986. For this, in part, we can thank the Food Network and the emergence of the "hot male chef". Men's participation in more mundane chores—cleaning, laundry and other indoor household work—increased from 22 per cent in 1986 to only 33 per cent in 2015. —reprinted from *Maclean's*

Read the Statistics Canada research at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2017001-eng.htm>

ACROSS CANADA

CANADA

The Government of Canada has released a new Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework. The deal sets out five conditions for the \$7.5-billion in child-care spending the Liberals allocated for the next 11 years: quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity in early learning and child care. It is intended to be complementary to the proposed development of a separate framework for Indigenous early learning and child care. Quebec did not join the deal, as it has its own universal child-care program. British Columbia was also unable to participate at the meeting due to the impact of its recent provincial election.

The minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Jean-Yves Duclos said the federal government will sign individual three-year agreements with each province and territory in the coming months. The bilateral agreements – totalling \$1.2-billion over the next three years – will outline the federal funding for each province and territory to address their specific early-learning and child-care needs. Child-care advocates are concerned about the agreement for its focus on particular populations rather than all families and would like to see the agreement include universality.

ALBERTA

The Alberta government's pilot program offering a \$25-per-day daycare program is starting to roll out in selected areas in the province. There are 22 Early Learning and Childcare Centres selected to take part in the \$10-million pilot announced late last year. So far 13 grants of up to \$500,000 have been allocated under the program. The province of Alberta's NDP government wants the program to help make life more affordable for families throughout Alberta. The main goal is to get to \$25-a-day child care across the province," he said. The province first announced the project late last year, saying the locations would be spread out in rural and urban areas in accessible places such as hospitals and public buildings. Last month the province said the pilot-program will offer 1,296 licensed child care spaces, create about 120 new jobs and allow an estimated 357 Albertans to enter the workforce.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

New Democratic Party leader John Horgan has promised that an NDP-Green coalition government will implement a \$10-a-day childcare plan in British Columbia. The NDP has also promised 22,000 new childcare spaces by 2020, up to 65,000 new spaces by 2022. The BC Liberals, who won the most seats in the May election and remain in power for the time being, had pledged to create 13,000 new childcare spaces by 2020 while maintaining the current childcare subsidy capped at \$550 a month, a little over half the average monthly cost of care in Metro Vancouver. But the government could start providing \$10-a-day childcare at existing childcare programs as early as next month, says Emily Mlieczko, executive director of the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia, who developed the initial \$10-a-day proposal with the Coalition of Childcare Advocates in 2011. The plan calls for eliminating fees altogether for families making \$40,000 or less.



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MANITOBA

The Manitoba government is currently developing a multi-year ELCC strategy. In March, it announced one of the first initiatives, an investment of nearly \$6.2 million for 15 community-based capital projects that will create up to 739 licensed spaces across Manitoba.

The Manitoba government took another step to shorten wait times and create more licensed child-care spaces by opening a new application intake for early learning and child care (ELCC) community-based capital projects. Minister Scott Fielding announced that they will support major expansion projects to increase spaces or build new centres in order to meet the high demand for quality, licensed spaces across the province. The building fund is aimed to provide capital funding support to projects that will build a new non-profit child-care centre or renovate an existing centre for the purposes of adding child care spaces. The 2017-18 budget includes up to \$2.8 million. Grant recipients receive up to 40 per cent of capital costs to a maximum of

\$600,000 for projects in community-owned or leased buildings

NEWFOUNDLAND

More families in Newfoundland and Labrador will get help with child care expenses, as the provincial government bumps up the income threshold for the first time in a decade. Starting June 1, a family with an annual income of \$32,000 or less will qualify for a full or partial subsidy. That compares with the previous threshold of \$27,500 which has been unchanged since 2007. The subsidy is available to families with children in a licensed day care centre or a regulated home-based child care setting. "More families with low to middle incomes will have access to crucial supports," said Dale Kirby, minister of education and early childhood development. The change, was announced in the 2017 provincial budget and will cost \$2 million.

NOVA SCOTIA

The 2017 Nova Scotia general election held on May 30, 2017, to elect members

to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly saw the Liberals under Stephen McNeil win a re-election with a majority government. The Liberals promised a universal preschool program for 4-year-olds with a program that could cost \$49M a year by 2020. Starting in the fall, a Liberal government would spend \$3.7 million to offer pre-primary in 30 new classes across the province. The numbers and budget would ramp up in future years as the preschool program is rolled out, largely inside schools. By 2020, the Liberals promise universal access for 9,000 four-year-olds at a cost of \$49 million per year.

NEW BRUNSWICK

The provincial government is investing an additional \$56 million in early childhood and education initiatives as part of the 2017-18 budget, bringing the total budget for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to \$1.2 billion

Early childhood educators and directors say they feel "devalued" by the Gallant government after the province failed to provide funding to Early Childhood Care and

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Education New Brunswick (ECCENB). The association's grant funding hasn't been approved for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, resulting in 14 layoffs since January and the announced closure of ECCENB's office. ECCENB represents industry professionals and provides professional development to educators.

ONTARIO

Ontario will spend \$1.6 billion over the next five years to kick-start its historic commitment to create high quality affordable child care for all parents who need it. This is the province's largest-ever capital investment in child care, where the money is expected to help create 45,000 new spaces in schools, public buildings and workplaces by 2022. The money is part of the government's new policy framework for child care announced by Naidoo-Harris and Education Minister Mitzi Hunter in June. If implemented, Ontario would become the first province outside Quebec to embrace the idea of universal child care. The plan includes focusing expansion in the public and non-profit sectors, developing strategies to address affordability and the child-care workforce, boosting inclusion for children with special needs and drafting a provincial definition of quality in early-years programs for kids up to age 12.

PEI

New legislation governing child care and early-learning centres on P.E.I. came into effect Jan. 1 this year. The *Early Learning and Child Care Act* was actually passed

by the legislature back in 2010, but was never brought into force. Government officials say there were a number of reasons for the delay, including several years needed to write the regulations. The new act includes updated health and safety requirements for childcare centres, stipulations on equipment to be used and curriculum to be followed. It also includes new enforcement measures that the government says will strengthen the ability of the Child Care Facilities Board to make sure child-care centres, both licensed and unlicensed, comply with the legislation.

QUEBEC

The Quebec Liberal government introduced 100 new kindergarten classes for four-year-old children at the beginning of this school year. Now they are adding 100 more classes next year for a total of 288 classes across the province in low-income communities. Over 2,500 kids in low-income communities will benefit. The Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) opposition has been pushing for kindergarten for all four-year-old children and even introduced a private members bill last May. The government defeated it. The education minister also announced a re-investment of \$40 million for daycares, although \$20 million of that was already committed in the last budget. The new funds include \$9 million for training for personnel, \$4 million to organize visits for kids to their future schools and \$10 million to prepare nutritious meals.

CALENDAR

September

13-17
Calgary, Alberta
Unleashing the Power of Play

Join us in Calgary for the IPA Triennial World Conference 13-17 September 2017. Are you passionate about the benefits of play? Register for the conference. The conference website at <http://canada2017.ipaworld.org>

October

16-17
Edmonton, Alberta
Doing What's Right: Through a Social Justice Lens

Alberta Early Years Conference 2017. Visit our website for Registration and Speaker information: www.albertaearyyears.ca

November

28-30
Victoria, British Columbia
From the Outside Looking In...

"From the Outside Looking In.. British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society's 2017 Indigenous Disability and Wellness Gathering. More info at <http://bcands2017gathering.com/>

RESOURCES

Connecting kids to nature through play

The objective of EarthPLAY is to **put self-directed outdoor play back into the lives of children** as a natural part of their day-to-day lives. EarthPLAY encompasses a broad spectrum of projects that address play provision in schools, childcare centres, parks, streets and other community green spaces, highlighting the importance of freely chosen outdoor play as a vital determinant of health and social wellbeing. We thank our core sponsor, **TD Friends of the Environment Fund**, for supporting the integration of EarthPLAY into Earth Day Canada. <https://ecokids.ca/play/earthplay>

